What is claimed is:

1. A method of obtaining expression in mammalian cells of a polypeptide of interest, which method comprises transferring into said cells a nucleic acid construct comprising a minimal promoter sequence operably linked to a coding sequence for the polypeptide.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the construct is delivered directly into a subject.

3. A method according to claim 2, wherein the construct in delivered by injection, transdermal particle delivery, inhalation, topically, orally, intranasally or transmucosally.

4. A method according to claim 3, wherein the construct is delivered by needleless injection.

5. A method according to claim 1, wherein the construct is delivered *ex vivo* into cells taken from a subject and the cells are reintroduced into the subject.

6. A method according to claim 1, wherein the subject is a human.

7. ~~A method according to claim 1, wherein the polypeptide is an antigen.~~

8. A method according to claim 7, wherein the antigen is an antigen of a viral, bacterial, parasite or fungal pathogen.

9. A method according to claim 7, wherein the antigen is a tumor-specific antigen or an antigen associated with an autoimmune disease.

10. A method according to claim 7, wherein the antigen comprises a B-cell epitope or a T-cell epitope.

11. A method according to claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid construct is coated onto carrier particles.

12. A method according to claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid construct is a DNA construct.

13. A method according to claim 1, wherein the minimal promoter sequence consists essentially of a human cytomegalovirus (hCMV) immediate early promoter sequence, a pseudorabies virus (PRV) early promoter region, a simian cytomegalovirus (sCMV) immediate early promoter sequence or a functional variant thereof.

14. A method according to claim 13, wherein the minimal promoter sequence consists essentially of the sequence spanning positions 0 to -118 of the hCMV immediate early promoter region or a functional variant of the said spanning sequence.

15. Coated particles suitable for use in particle-mediated nucleic acid immunisation, which particles comprise carrier particles coated with a nucleic acid construct comprising a minimal promoter sequence operably linked to a coding sequence encoding an antigen.

16. Coated particles according to claim 15, wherein the carrier particles are tungsten or gold particles.

17. Coated particles according to claim 15, wherein the antigen is an antigen of a viral, bacterial, parasite or fungal pathogen.

18. Coated particles according to claim 15, wherein the antigen is a tumor-specific antigen or an antigen associated with an autoimmune disease.

19. Coated particles according to claim 15, wherein the antigen comprises a B-cell epitope or a T-cell epitope.

20. Coated particles according to claim 15, wherein the nucleic acid construct is DNA construct.

21. Coated particles according to claim 15, wherein the minimal promoter sequence consists essentially of a human cytomegalovirus (hCMV) immediate early promoter sequence, a pseudorabies virus (PRV) early promoter region, a simian cytomegalovirus (sCMV) immediate early promoter sequence or a functional variant thereof.

22. Coated particles according to claim 21, wherein the minimal promoter sequence consists essentially of the sequence spanning positions 0 to -118 of the hCMV immediate early promoter region or a functional variant of the said spanning sequence.

23. A particle acceleration device suitable for particle-mediated nucleic acid immunisation, the said device being loaded with coated particles as defined in claim 15.

24. A purified, isolated minimal promoter sequence.

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25. A nucleic acid construct comprising a minimal promoter sequence operably linked to a coding sequence.

26. A vector comprising the nucleic acid construct of claim 25.

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27. A vector according to claim 26 which is a plasmid.